

THE SPY WHO KNEW TOO MUCH

BY JOHN BARRON

Posted to Tokyo in 1975 by the KGB, the Soviet Union's agency of terror and espionage, Stanislav Levchenko worked with enormous success against the Japanese and their ally, the United States. And yet he was plagued with doubts about his masters, doubts exacerbated by devious plots within the KGB itself. Here in a Reader's Digest exclusive, John Barron, an internationally recognized authority on the KGB, lays bare the complete details of the psychological and moral hell that Levchenko inhabited, and of the brave act that rocked the Japanese nation and is delivering aftershocks to this day.

STANISLAV ALEKSANDROVICH LEVCHENKO seemed an ideal KGB officer. Handsome, with high cheekbones, straight nose, thick auburn hair and dark, thoughtful eyes, and with a slender, athletic physique, he appeared to belong in diplomatic salons, elegant restaurants or parliamentary offices.

His education had prepared him well. At age nine, Levchenko entered an experimental secondary school where many courses were taught in English. Later, he spent six years at Moscow University's Institute of Oriental Languages, did postgraduate research on Japanese politics, was assigned to sea



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duty where he interrogated captured Japanese fishermen, and visited Japan six times. By then his Japanese was fluent. Working with the Soviet Peace Committee, and then the Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee, he proved himself skilled at what the Soviets call Active Measures.* He was able to charm or manipulate foreigners, ranging from American Army deserters to PLO chieftain Yasir Arafat. He wrote well enough to prepare commentaries for Radio Moscow, articles for *Novoye Vremya* (*New Times*) magazine and ceremonial proclamations signed by Brezhnev.

The KGB had investigated Levchenko (three times: first in 1966 when he was cleared for assignment with Soviet military intelligence, the GRU; a second time in 1968 when he was directed by the KGB to try to subvert Japanese diplomats in Moscow; and again two years later when he was inducted into the KGB's First Chief Directorate, which conducts all foreign-intelligence operations.

Each time, his apartment was bugged, his telephone tapped. He was put under surveillance and tested with provocateurs. No ideological marks against him were ever recorded. Given his overall background and qualifications, it was sensible for the KGB to post him to Japan under the guise

*The attempt, both overt and covert, to spread lies, rumors, forgeries and other disinformation and propaganda, in order to manipulate the opinion and action of others.

of correspondent for *New Times*.

By the mid-1970s the Tokyo Residency ranked as one of the four or five most important KGB outposts. Japan had become a high-priority target, a treasure trove of wealth and technology to be mined illicitly. The Russians also found Japan one of the best places to steal American technology.

For Levchenko the road to Tokyo began when he went to the Foreign Intelligence School outside Moscow. Behind a yellow-masonry wall six feet high and topped with barbed wire stood a four-story brick building with classrooms, faculty offices, separate libraries for classified and unclassified materials, dormitory, cafeteria and dispensary. A large, well-equipped gymnasium, swimming pool and firing range occupied the basement. Armed KGB officers wearing civilian clothes patrolled the grounds, accompanied at night by watchdogs.

Six days a week, work began at 8 a.m. with an hour of rigorous exercise—cross-country running, calisthenics, swimming, or training in hand-to-hand combat. Classes ran from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and from 3 to 6 p.m., and students were expected to study at least three hours every evening. They were forbidden to reveal their surnames; they would address one another and be addressed by superior officers solely by pseudonyms.

Early in the winter of 1972, Levchenko's section returned to Moscow to practice the tactics they